

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT/REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Richard Bis on 09 February 2012.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claims 23-28 are cancelled.

Claims 1-14 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Applicants' amendment and remarks of file date 02 December 2011, see Remarks, page 6 of 9, penultimate paragraph with respect to the amendment of claim 1, specifically the addition of the limitations reciting the elastic limb-sealing means extend radially inwardly from the circumference of the tubular sleeve, distinguish the claimed invention over the cited art. The application is in condition for allowance except for newly added claims 23-28 which are cancelled as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ginger T. Chapman whose telephone number is (571)272-4934. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva can be reached on (571) 272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Ginger T Chapman/
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02/08/2012

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3761